

REMARKS

Entry of the foregoing and reconsideration of the application identified in caption, as amended, pursuant to and consistent with 37 C.F.R. §1.116 and in light of the remarks which follow, are respectfully requested.

At the outset, Applicant notes with appreciation the indication that claim 4 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the features of the base claim and any intervening claims. See Official Action at page 4.

By the above amendments, claims 4 and 14 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. The subject matter of claim 4 has been incorporated into claim 1. Claim 6 has been amended for readability purposes. Entry of the foregoing amendments is proper at least because they are effective to place the application in condition for allowance or in better form for appeal. See M.P.E.P. §714.12.

In the Official Action, claims 1, 2, 6-12 and 14 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious over U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0039651 (*Murata*) in view of Japanese Patent Document No. 2002-194250 (*JP '250*). Claims 3, 15 and 16 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious over *Murata* in view of *JP '250*, and U.S. Patent No. 4,572,888 (*Maeda et al*).

Without addressing the propriety of the Examiner's comments in connection with the above rejections, and in an effort to expedite prosecution, the subject matter of claim 4 has been incorporated into independent claim 1 by the above amendments. As noted above, the Examiner has indicated that claim 4 contains allowable subject matter. As such, for at least this reason, independent claim 1 is now in condition for allowance, and withdrawal of the above §103(a) rejections is respectfully requested.

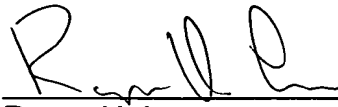
From the foregoing, further and favorable action in the form of a Notice of Allowance is believed to be next in order, and such action is earnestly solicited. If there are any questions concerning this paper or the application in general, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,

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